

## **Safe Summer Outings**

As we prepare for summertime picnics and outings, food safety should not go unnoticed. In all outings away from home, including picnics, softball games, barbeques, hiking, camping and other activities, follow the guidelines below to ensure safe food:

### **Keep Everything Clean**

Washing your hands before preparing food is one of the most important things you can do to keep your food safe. In addition, all utensils, cutting boards, dishes and countertops should be washed with hot, soapy water before you start and between each food item. A solution of one teaspoon of bleach in one quart of water can also be used to sanitize all surfaces and cooking utensils after washing them. Bring disposable wipes or biodegradable soap for handwashing and dishwashing when a sink is not available.

### **Keep Hot Foods Hot**

All hot foods need to stay above 140EF. Insulated containers can be used to help keep hot foods hot. Additionally, keeping containers closed and/or storing the food in a warmer, such as a crock pot, can help keep the food above 140EF.

### **Keep Cold Foods Cold**

Keep cold food refrigerated until you are ready to leave home. To keep the food below 41EF, use insulated containers, such as coolers, and pack them with ice, blocks of ice, or frozen ice packs. Storing the food in closed containers will also help keep the temperature below 41EF. In addition, keep your cooler out of the sun and covered for further insulation and bring a separate cooler for food, since drink coolers are opened and closed more often. Discard food if there is no ice left in the cooler.

### **Microwave Cooking/Reheating**

When using the microwave to cook or reheat meals, cover the food and cook it until the temperature reaches 165EF or above for 15 seconds. Be sure to check the temperature with a thermometer and let the food stand for 2 minutes to distribute the heat evenly.

### **Safe Drinking Water**

When going on summer outings, it is important to ensure that you have access to safe drinking water. It is not safe to drink straight from streams or lakes when camping, hiking or during another activity. Take bottled water or boil the water for at least one minute to kill microorganisms. At higher elevations, boil the water for several minutes.

### **What Foods to Bring?**

If you plan to be out and away from refrigeration for more than a day, what food you should take is more complicated. You can pack cold foods for the first day, but will need to pack shelf-stable items for the subsequent days. Some lightweight options that do not require

refrigeration or careful packaging include: peanut butter in plastic jars; concentrated juice boxes; canned tuna, chicken or beef; dried noodles and soups; beef jerky and other dried meats; dehydrated foods; dried fruits and nuts; powdered milk and fruit drinks.

### **SUMMARY:**

- Wash hands thoroughly before preparing food and after handling raw foods.
- Effectively wash dishes and cooking utensils.
- Keep hot foods above 140°F and cold foods below 41°F. Take temperatures with food thermometer to ensure proper storage.
- Reheat and microwave to 165°F or above.
- Pack safe drinking water or boil water to destroy microorganisms.
- Pack foods that do not require refrigeration if it is not available.

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